In this issue there is art by **Tali Burry-Schnepp**, **Henry Murphy**, **Ana Neifeld**, **Alex Aubry** and **Meg Aubry**. There is an essay and a poem by **Ryan Tuozzolo**. **Veda Carmine-Ritchie** sent us a short story and we loved it. We also got excited about several poems by **James Kelly Quigley** and **Stuart Olson Beal**. **Mark Cachia-Riedl** translated a poem and wrote an essay about it. **Ashton Carless** helped us pick some poems. **Shea Stevenson** edited and wrote a short story. **Adam Krasnoff** helped edit also. **Isabelle Cachia-Riedl** put it all together and wrote you a letter.

Dear Reader,

This is the fourth issue:
it has been a year, our first one. Hurrah!

The theme is reciprocity, which applies to nearly everything.
You and me for example.
I have written and you are reading (you see, it's happening just now).
How wonderful.

I have also been thinking of a kind of release or submission. This applies to the theme because there are two things and a reaction: a trinity.

To do anything worthwhile in this world (and I can't think of anything to the contrary) one must focus and work very hard for a while, then when all that work has accumulated into something precious and is "done" or done with you, the rest of existence asks for it and we, its humble servant, say yes, and let go. You say yes to the universe. Maybe you say yes to God. Lispector wrote at the beginning of Hour of the Star, "Everything in the world began with a yes." That makes my blood hot.

To try and explain it better:
Yes is both an invitation and a gift. It is to submit and relinquish.

It makes me excited and depressed all at once and I try and say yes to the sadness and yes to the incredulity and yes, please yes, to the joy. I try to say yes every time I write something for this publication and yes to the response, which is often good but sometimes not. I try to say yes when something is ruined, irrevocably so, strip it for parts and try again to put them together, having forgotten the failure but intending to make something new new new again.

I would like to finally, after a year, say yes to you readers. The readership of this publication (whoever you are, and I have met most of you) are people with truly great taste. I must confess that in issues past I have given little consideration to the reader. I mean that I have not really thought about it all that much–and I prefer it that way. But as our publication has grown and The Goose Egg's readers have become more obviously present I want to take a moment to say yes to you. I do not know what effect this will have on our actual paper but now you know and maybe it feels a tad bit different. It does to me.

In other news, we are back to our regular programming. I want to thank everyone who submitted and everyone that let us publish their work. We are getting more and more submissions these days so we have decided to vote on what to publish and what to keep in the backlog for future consideration.

I also want to announce Blue Horse Press! We will be printing more small run chapbooks and artbooks under this name. The Telephone Project is one of the first in this endeavor. It's a perfect bound art book which documents a year-long chain of words to images. Check it out on the website (thegooseegg.org).

There's even more news! You can now BUY the Goose Egg for five bucks a dozen on our website, to ship. We will only have the most recent issue for this option so get 'em while you can.

If you want merch it's all there too. But bear in mind our fulfillment consists of me (a full time student with another job) and a dinky printer so please be forgiving on shipping times. I am sorry I will try harder. Also please join our newsletter, which is also accessible from the website for more frequent up-to-date updates.

OkwellIthinkthat'sit.Ihopeyouenjoythisseason'sissue.Pleasesubmitasalways.
Iwillcontinuetotrytomakethispublicationaninvitationandagifttoyou.

Of all sorts,

I s a

illustration by Ana Neifeld

Announcing...

THE TELEPHONE PROJECT

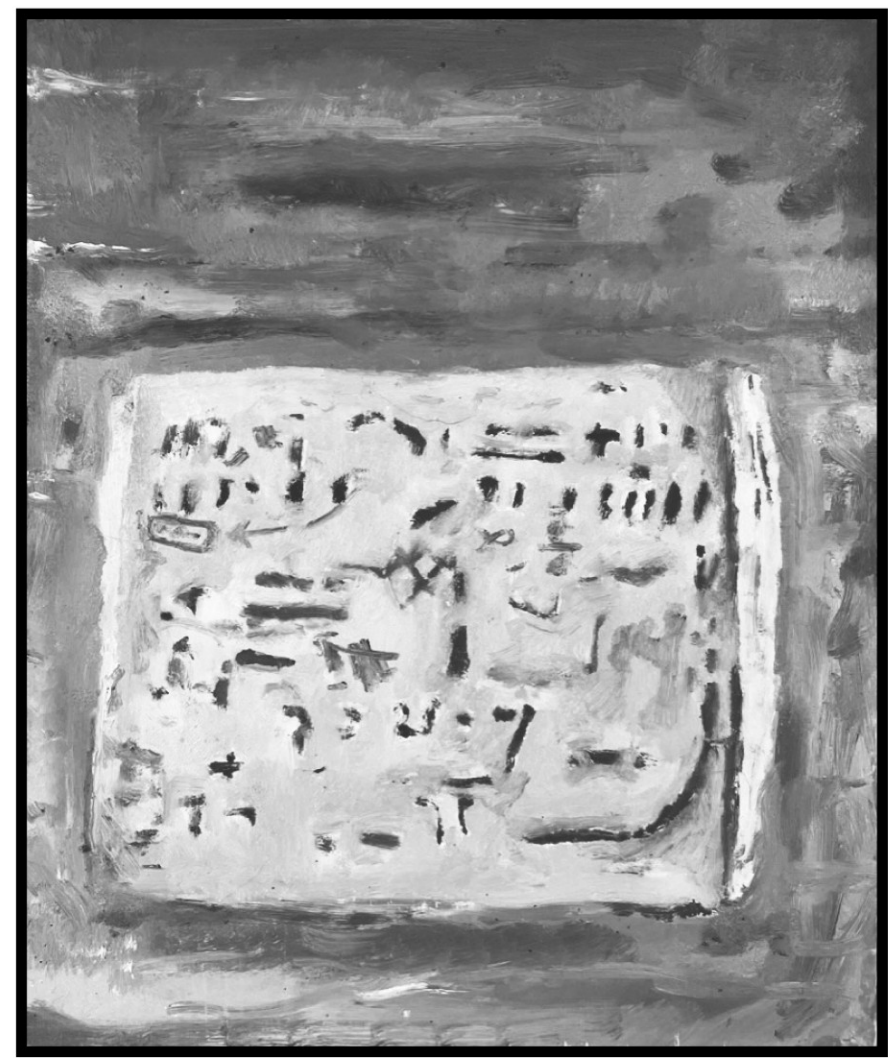
We published a book! The origins of The Telephone Project actually precede The Goose Egg. It is a collaborative chain of word to image to word. It was kicked of with a poem–by me your very own TGE editor–and responded to with a painting–by Henry Murphy our very own illustrious illustrator. I then sent the painting along to another writer and then that to another image maker and so on... I kept it anonymous and secret so no one saw anything except the work they were responding to–until now!! Now you can purchase a document of this experiment on thegooseegg.org, and I would insist that you do. Its $12 including shipping, full color, and if I dare say, a page turner. I have included the first pieces from the book here to intice you:

About some kind of image, depicted from a mind grasping for something, or else expelling it. Amidst this you are electrified. Those people on this steep uphill trudge, we play in the mud and forget the bodily anxieties of dirt. You see them from one peak across a valley, with a flare in hand and through the mist, a twin flame. We all dance together in this melancholy. A small offering of unhindered joy for a piece of cake, a kiss, a midnight game. We are passing notes in class. Sharing nuclear codes on damp napkins. And seeing each other with wide eyes, we try to absorb bits of refracted light.

It seems to me we have reached another apocalypse, a brink approached then retreated. Playing at death. In the desperate advancing our hands are fast, furiously scrubbing at the canvas or scratching away at paper. We are conscious of an immanence, a departure or arrival of some unknown sort. In this entrapment we feel free. Many times generations before; they were confronted with the same edge, we have still not reached it. A cliff for every hundred years and many hundreds more, but how is this not the last? It does not make sense. And yet we are still dancing.

It becomes harder to see each other now, through fog and mist. Now it is wildfire smoke too, a torch is unrecognizable. But we are squinting through the cosmic rays. Radiate light from nearby L.E.D. screens illuminate smoke, making it more opaque. A glinting like mica rock can cut through and we blindly grab at it. Our disposition towards shiny objects avails us. We find each other in a small clearing, surrounding a pile of glistening rubbish. A clenched hand is freed as the sparkling treasure drops.

We notice our friends' hands, they are all reaching towards each other



DER ISTER

My path to translating Hölderlin's poem has been as sinuous as the river it invokes. First came —*The Ister* (2004), a documentary following a philosophical journey from the Danube's delta to its source (from East to West). Its subject is Martin Heidegger's 1942 lectures on the poem ("Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister'"). Heidegger's philosophy is explained throughout the film by several French philosophers; the movie also recounts historical events that took place along the river's course. "Ister" is the classical name for the upper Danube used by Hölderlin in the poem, which did not have a title until it was published posthumously. Second was a bittersweet encounter with Tübingen's famous "Hölderlinturm", a semi-circular structure overlooking the Neckar river where the mentally ill Hölderlin spent the last few decades of his life. Next came Claudio Magris' *Danube* (1986) in English translation, which is a moving (some would say maudlin) elegy on the river's history interwoven with personal stories of love and loss. Finally, I made it to Heidegger himself.

Heidegger recorded his own reading of "Der Ister" late in life, and the audio is included at the end of the movie. It is one of those ancient-sounding German voices that make our flesh crawl because it conjures a whole German gamut of provincialism and cruelty. One can imagine him delivering the lectures of 1942 in a similar, if slightly younger, voice. Walter Biemel, a student of Heidegger's who attended the lectures between April and July 1942, published the lectures in 1983 as part of Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe* ("Complete Works"). 1942 was the year in which the German Reich began to implement the Final Solution by sending increasing numbers of victims to extermination camps. The United States was fighting Japan in the Pacific, and German troops reached their easternmost position in Stalingrad. Bombs were falling on German cities.

Heidegger's approach to philosophy and aesthetics was enormously influential in postwar Europe. At the same time, his relationship with the Nazi party and leadership is well documented and endlessly discussed and written about (including his close relationship with Jews). It appears that there was a certain affinity between Heidegger's thought, which explored the nature of human existence ("being") as rooted in its locale, and the National Socialist emphasis on "blood and soil." This connectedness between people and land is not an exclusively fascist concept, but it undoubtedly had its appeal to thinkers like Heidegger, who were trying to fashion a philosophical path that veered away from both Western rationalism and a Christian worldview.

In his lectures, Heidegger presented a specific and very limited interpretation of Hölderlin's poem. He ties its sources to Sophokles' *Antigone*, which had been translated by Hölderlin himself. But the connection is opaque—a straightforward reading of *Antigone* reveals a play that condemns overbearing statecraft when it conflicts with a higher, more universal law. Heidegger leaves this theme aside and focuses instead on the translation of Greek mythos to the German countryside via poetry. Germany, he seems to suggest, is the proper heir of Greek philosophy.

What is most jarring in the lectures are a few decisive statements:

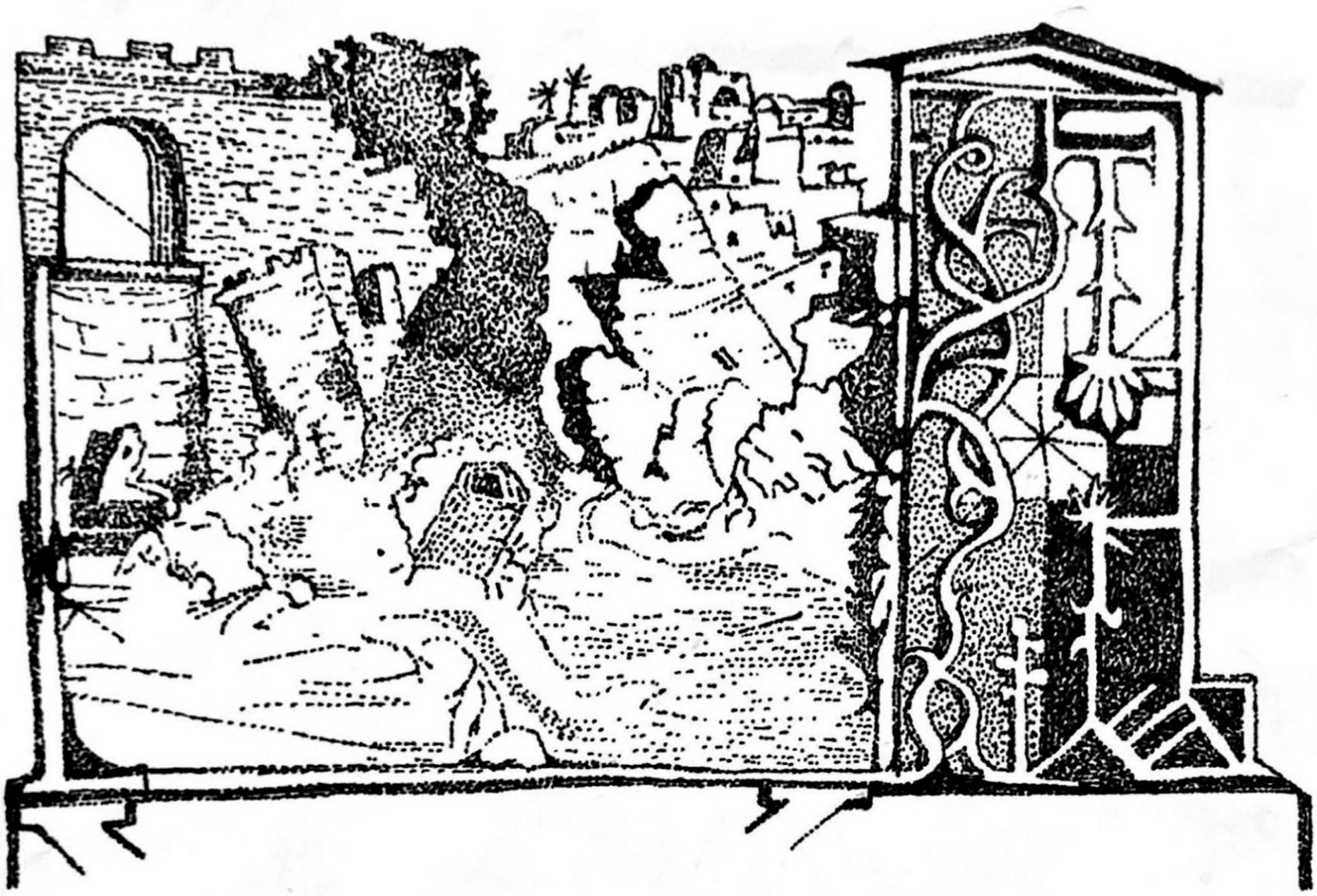
"We know today that the Anglo-Saxon world of Americanism has resolved to destroy the origins of the western world, Europe, and our own home. Origins cannot be erased. America's entry into this world war is not its appearance in history but already the last American act of its lack of history and its self-destruction. Because the decision to enter the war is a denial of origins and a rejection of historicity. The hidden original spirit of western thought has less than contempt for this self-destruction and awaits its own pinnacle in contented original repose." I translated Heidegger's term "Sternstunde" as pinnacle. Literally it means "star hour." In mid-1942 he was still awaiting a philosophical zenith for his own version of Western thought! Later in the lecture, he explains the nature of both the United States and the Soviet Union as "massloss"—excessive, boundless. He adds that the United States is particularly dangerous because it combines its excesses with democracy and Christianity.

Heidegger's view is historically uninformed, and little time needs to be wasted on refuting his deeply disturbing view of world affairs (which echoes the official line propagated by the Third Reich's leadership). Heidegger is using the Romantic Hölderlin to tunnel back to a primeval force that preceded both Christianity and the Enlightenment. So did Nazi "philosophy." Heidegger, tied to locality, fluent in Greek, turned away from Christianity, and was contemptuous of democracy and rationality because they could not answer his enduring questions. He was like a xenophobic farmer tilling his German soil while contemplating Plato and Hegel over his plow. Buried in that "Heimat" was a lack of concern for humanity at large (or even his fellow Germans, not all of whom were on Hitler's side): no thought of the people of Europe raped and killed; no consideration for the narrowness and ever-present fear permeating German public life; no insight into the real course of history. So a few short paragraphs in their amorality destroy much of his thought, in my view. Perhaps philosophy is still possible after the Holocaust (although I doubt it can say anything of universal value), but Heidegger undermined his own brilliance with his squalid and inhumane commentary.

What could he have said instead? Many things, even without betraying his own innermost convictions. That the Jewish communities in the eastern "pale of settlement" were just as tied to the land and the locality, just as much heirs to the wisdom of the Greeks, and thinkers as deep or deeper than he. That the Nazi's concept of "blood and soil" was a meretricious construct supposed to justify naked murder. That the "Sternstunde" of philosophy had already expired in 1933 (when Heidegger joined the party and became university president). What that failure invokes is immense sadness and—if one considers it in all seriousness—hate. Hate for the fact that one of the most brilliant Germans evaded the dictates of humanity and truth.

In the spirit of a continuing darkness over Germany, the translation of the Ister poem took shape. Through all the pain and horror (the memory of which must not be allowed to fade) we can glimpse a sense of Romantic beauty that does <u>not</u> rely on excavating the deep roots of German thought (where dark and rank growth has since sprouted). Let's not dig too far down for fear of seeing the devil's face. Stay in the stream, its riparian shores, its invocation of past and future in a continuum of thought and emotion. Feel its sadness and tenuously wander in its words, tentatively partaking of its flashes of warmth and understanding. Like being German itself, it still has something mysterious and poetic to give, but only if offered in humility and self-discontentedness.

written by Mark Cachia-Riedl
translation of "Der Ister" by Mark Cachia-Riedl
illustrated by Henry Murphy



Jetzt komme, Feuer!
Begierig sind wir,
Zu schauen den Tag,
Und wenn die Prüfung
Ist durch die Knie gegangen,
Mag einer spüren das Waldgeschrei.
Wir singen aber vom Indus her
Fernangekommen und
Vom Alpheus, lange haben
Das Schickliche wir gesucht,
Nicht ohne Schwingen mag
Zum Nächsten einer greifen
Geradezu
Und kommen auf die andere Seite.
Hier aber wollen wir bauen.
Denn Ströme machen urbar
Das Land. Wenn nämlich Kräuter wachsen
Und an denselben gehn
Im Sommer zu trinken die Tiere,
So gehn auch Menschen daran.

Man nennet aber diesen den Ister.
Schön wohnt er. Es brennet der Säulen Laub,
Und reget sich. Wild stehn
Sie aufgerichtet, untereinander; darob
Ein zweites Maß, springt vor
Von Felsen das Dach. So wundert
Mich nicht, daß er
Den Herkules zu Gaste geladen,
Fernglänzend, am Olympos drunten,
Da der, sich Schatten zu suchen
Vom heißen Isthmos kam,
Denn voll des Mutes waren
Daselbst sie, es bedarf aber, der Geister wegen,
Der Kühlung auch. Darum zog jener lieber
An die Wasserquellen hieher und gelben Ufer,
Hoch duftend oben, und schwarz
Vom Fichtenwald, wo in den Tiefen
Ein Jäger gern lustwandelt
Mittags, und Wachstum hörbar ist
An harzigen Bäumen des Isters,

Der scheinet aber fast
Rückwärts zu gehen und
Ich mein, er müsse kommen
Von Osten.
Vieles wäre
Zu sagen davon. Und warum hängt er
An den Bergen grad? Der andre,
Der Rhein, ist seitwärts
Hinweggegangen. Umsonst nicht gehn
Im Trocknen die Ströme. Aber wie? Ein Zeichen braucht es,
Nichts anderes, schlecht und recht, damit es Sonn
Und Mond trag im Gemüt, untrennbar,
Und fortgeh, Tag und Nacht auch, und
Die Himmlischen warm sich fühlen aneinander.
Darum sind jene auch
Die Freude des Höchsten. Denn wie käm er
Herunter? Und wie Hertha grün,
Sind sie die Kinder des Himmels. Aber allzugeduldig
Scheint der mir, nicht
Freier, und fast zu spotten. Nämlich wenn

Angehen soll der Tag
In der Jugend, wo er zu wachsen
Anfängt, es treibet ein anderer da
Hoch schon die Pracht, und Füllen gleich
In den Zaum knirscht er, und weithin hören
Das Treiben die Lüfte,
Ist der zufrieden;
Es brauchet aber Stiche der Fels
Und Furchen die Erd,
Unwirtbar wär es, ohne Weile;
Was aber jener tuet, der Strom,
weiß niemand.

Sunfire, rise up!
Hungrily we yearn
To glimpse a new day,
And when that ordeal
Shatters through our bones
Someone may feel its wooden cries.
But we chant from the shores
Of Indus and Alpheius, far-eastern
Streams from where we labored
To find that proper chord.
We strain to grasp what comes
And so bound onto a farther shore.
And on that river's edge,
We set to forge anew,
Where streams make fertile soil.
As creatures come to slake
Their thirst and browse in summer's heat,
So man will do alike.

In beauty rests the Ister, named,
And lined with flaming pillars,
Soaring up and wildly writhing,
Still higher yet a rocky canopy.
For that, it seems, a chosen guest
Is Hercules, gleaming from afar,
On Olympos' heights yet seeking
Shaded realms beyond
The burning Isthmus.
Even spirits filled with valor
Are needful of its verdant shadow.
So he was drawn into the springs
Close by the Ister's yellow shores.
Fragrant up above and down below
Black darkness where firs grow,
A hunter's pleasing mid-day ambles,
And all around sap whispers,
Audibly and strikes new shoots.

But Ister's source is strangely
West not East, as one would think
Its flow reversed.
One could speak of this
At length. And why
Close now to mountain slopes?
Brother Rhine flees angled
And for nought a stream
Seeks arid courses. But how?
A telltale must arise for nothing
And no other reason
But that it will contain
The moon and sun,
So coexist both day and night
In feeling, warmth and touch all those
Who call their home in heaven.
They are the ones
Who pour out joy in highest realms,
No matter how those dwellers
Could descend to earth or not.
In all their verdant freshness
They are celestial offspring still. And yet,
Impatience, nigh derision coming:

Commence the daylight's early youth,
Where growth was born and some have burst
To highest splendor and in glory.
And yet in harness they must suffer,
Far we hear their doings in the air, sated now.
Still rock needs splitting and the earth its furrow
Without a time to plant no hearth can stand.
But what the Ister plans, no man or spirit
Knows.

Poems by James Kelly Quigley

LA CITTÀ

Mad, rabid dogs facilitate order in the plaza. My negroni has just started a college fund. A crash comes from behind the music. The clouds insist they've been cheated out of their inheritance. Squad cars gleam with spunk and fizzle.

The server brings our check on a desiccated starfish who is only playing dead. As soon as we pay, he will rise with a smile and point out the hidden cameras: one in the ficus, another in the soufflé, and a third cleverly festooned in the band of the pastry chef's disposable bouffant.

Bastard pigeons steal crust from an innocent gutter. Now the gutter will go hungry, counting stars on the back of each eyelid.

We abandon the public square and retreat to our private heptagon. There's coffee and beer all over the babysitter's homework. I pay her in recommendations and send her away. In a house with 32 and a half leaks, we take a hot bath and "fly a kite." The lazy summer evening is my physician. I open wide for him and say, "Ahhh."

QUIERO

I want to smile so big it's illegal. I want to learn the origin of the phrase, "the apple of my eye." I want to compliment your schöne Hände.

I want to be dastardly like a high-end jewel thief. I want to dress in lies and contradictions. I want to be ignored when it suits me. I want a reprieve from marshmallow talk.

I want to name each of these twenty-seven ponds. I want an excuse to see the daffodils. I want to pluck the highest feather out of the stars. I want to live in a large and wondrous hazelnut.

I want to ignite a little scrap of wisdom every hour, on the hour, for twelve hours. I want to scoop up the ashes and feed them to my plants.

I want discontented people who fit in nowhere to piss and shit on my grave. I want to bend down and kiss your steak.

INTERGENERATIONAL FRIENDSHIP

Marc-André, Moose Whisperer of New Yokohama, arrived at the scene as a bull was being garlanded in the public forum. Several key members of the Homeowners Association lay dead among sixteen or seventeen heavy duty can-openers. Fiona had just won a blue ribbon at the science fair for her informative, yet remarkably aesthetic diorama of saxifrages—or, as they are more commonly known—rockfoils. Both of Fiona's parents were on the floor. As the moose lumbered over them, he made a great "hoof-clacket," which, according to Marc-André, is the official term.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HAROLD FAITH

Harold Faith's decision to enter the monastery was based upon his confidence in the merits of nominative determinism.

The Franciscans shook their tail feathers and ritually shunned Harold at his convocation. But the next morning was dewy and full of old-fashioned acoustic instruments. Harold woke to find one of his spiritual brothers kneeling at the end of the straw cot. He was scraping the dead skin from under Harold's feet into a big pail made of green tin.

This monk's name was Jesse, though he told Harold to call him Catfish Po' Boy, or Catfish for short. Catfish explained that the monastery maintained a strict no-waste policy, and a smile leaked across his face when he detailed how, as head gardener, he'd invested hundreds of hours into studying the agricultural benefits of nitrogen-rich human detritus.

Harold figured what the hay! the experience was like a very noble and manly pedicure. And if Catfish was able to grow vegetables with his peeling feet, Harold could only imagine the wonders Jesus might do with his peeling brain.

FELICIDADES

Children play with toy horses in the driveway. Big bushy alliums spring out of the ground and invite me somewhere. Good weather, university weather. I find the groom's mother and give her a belated compliment on the plum dress she wore last night. A natural redhead. We politely eat bagels. She wants to volunteer with horses, claims she doesn't mind cleaning up their stalls, she'll do whatever needs doing as long as she can be near sweet horses. I gesture toward the children and say I'm sensing a theme here. She literally says, "Guffaw." Everyone's drinking orange juice, maybe I need some orange juice. I've got a headache in my hands and inside the immaculate house the dining room is painted the deepest red. I'm getting a little damp under the arms, I pretend to look around for my sunglasses and escape to the nook where a ship in a bottle tries to sell me life insurance.

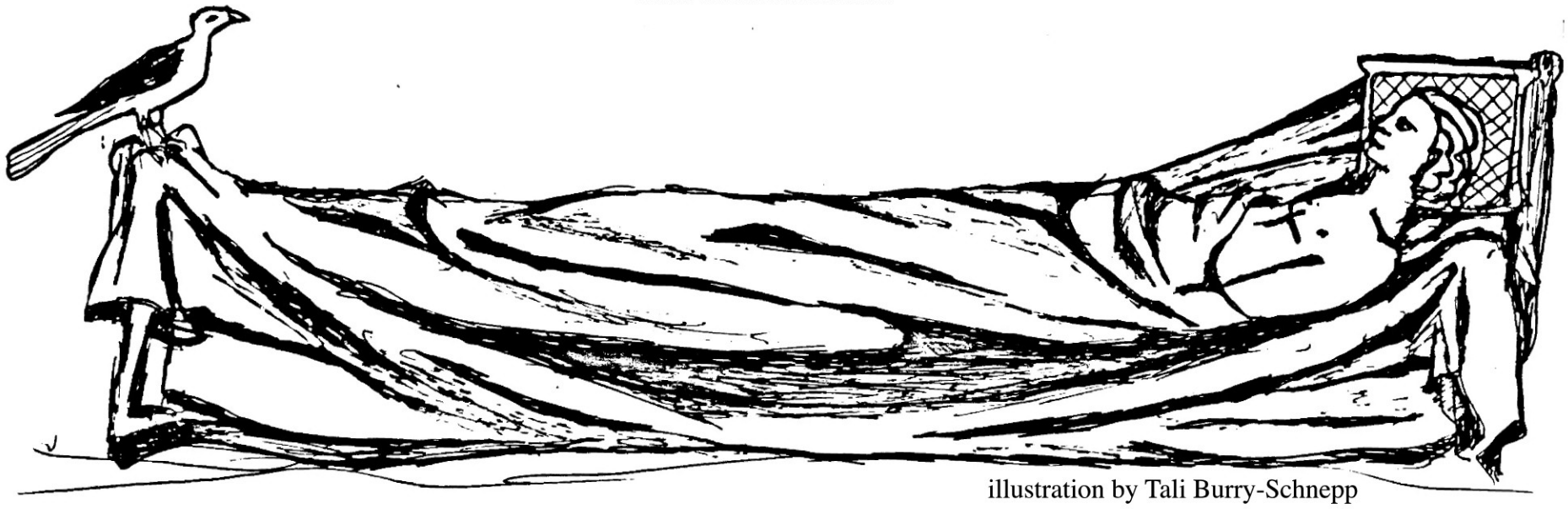


illustration by Tali Burry-Schnepp

CHILD OF THE LOOM

written by Shea Stevenson
illustrated by Alex Aubry

There is a hole in the accounts of the New York Public Works Office that must be fed or else the internet shuts down. As in all computers, everywhere, become re-individualized: dead ends again. A freelance cost-cutting agency noticed the hole in the early 2000s, skipped its check, and later that day an IT man who had tried everything anyone had ever taught him and it had all done shit sat in front of his boss' desktop, touched its frozen screen, and considered- really considered- that computers had been a mass hallucination, that maybe they had never worked, and never could, and now a tense fault line in the mantle of things had snapped back down to resolution.

That night, a senior member of staff, conservative in nature and convinced of its importance, personally delivered the check. It was addressed to a basement apartment under a church in Harlem. He knocked five times, tried the knob, then slid it under the door. All the computers were working again by morning. Officially, a sun-spot power surge.

A small threat assessment team in the CIA had spent the winter of 1946 outlining a paranoiac nightmare they had collectively drummed up about computers, which they called Network. Network was when computers could talk to one another. None of the higher ups, and only a few of their peers, seemed to give a shit at all. Remember: there were nuclear bombs now, which had already gotten a few prescient analysts vacations in the territories. It was officially deemed a "far-future threat", which meant: interesting, but useless.

The team, though, couldn't undream Network, and covetous of the grim decisiveness and manic fear for which they had been hired in the first place, saw a possible future a century away: Network will be made, and he who makes it will be its keeper. The presumably leviathan apparatus that could sustain a *world* connected, then, had better be proprietary, and whoever could operate such a machine would have to be trained.

The CIA could get the people, but not build the apparatus. In search of allies who had the space, proximity, and unchecked capital to consummate the plan, the team shared their pitch with choice members of New York City's informal Moses administration. These were men whose projects were already of blisteringly high concept, higher than any would come to be realized on the ground, and highest here, behind closed doors. They were also noted patriots, and devoted futurists. Their conversion to the cause was a matter of course. Folded into the team, they all saw the move to establish a monastic order of public servants as a lateral one.

This unnamed, unofficial mix of Moses men and CIA analysts kept their proposals vague, brief, and private. They had taken to heart that permission was for the elected, and forgiveness for the dead. The resulting corporate (read: clandestine) branch of the New York Public Works Office had under its purview one empty office downtown and a series of tunnels ostensibly built in a purely exploratory capacity (drainage, air-flow, reading the bedrock) that all converged upon a single central chamber rendered after a Catholic monastery in the mountains of Spain, but theirs was just south of Saint Nicholas Park, deep underground.

The monks themselves were simple to source from the CIAs bottomless well of nameless prisoners, who were already often subjected to psychological (shall we say:) experimentation. To turn a man Catholic was often not necessary- they fell from trees in those days- but to center his mind upon computers, to teach him to teach himself all there was to know about them, to help him see God in the turning of these pegs and paper punch-cards- that was the task. Most people rejected it on a spiritual level, unable to conceive of the project. To some, it was Revelation. The first abbot, writing on long tables of splayed out schematics, saw further than the men who had set him to it. Soon, they all did.

Geloma- the Loom- was a prototype supercomputer made by some of the leftovers from Los Alamos, a few Nazis, and a metallurgy company from Ohio, well paid then disestablished. The monks saw this embryonic form and imagined a Loom that spread and spread. They charted its body and debated additions, improvements, wrote long treatises outlining what constituted elaboration upon Geloma and what was mere mutation. Books became manuals. Geloma grew.

An early visitation to the monastery from two of the men who had funded Geloma had left them diametric portraits, dramatic counterparts: one man, an old CIA dog, never slept another sound night. In his old age, he dug tunnels in his yard in Connecticut for reasons he could never articulate to his wife or his therapist, but his son, with whom he had never attempted to speak of it, had the nearest thing to understanding. He played in those shallow tunnels, dark, cold, and dry, before he could really remember. The other man, one of Moses' devotees, was elated with the monks' progress. The machine looked positively alien, which pleased him, knowing that the machines the Russians were developing looked only Russian.

The two visitors reported their findings to the others of the ten, the Moses man recommending an incremental increase in the budget, seeing as they'd come so far already, and the CIA man urging them to double the budget and then cut him loose of it entirely. The budget doubled. He was let go. Manuals turned to scripture.

In 1996, one of the CIA men, elderly now and at the door of retirement, moved to check on Geloma with half a mind to reveal it to his superiors, breaking that decades-old agreement whose fruit had finally ripened, Network now upon them far ahead of schedule, albeit assuming another name. He couldn't find anything. No addresses, no names, not a note-to-self, secret memo, coded post-it, nothing. He scoured the subways, maintenance tunnels, ventilation shafts and open sewers, wandered Saint Nicholas park alone on cold nights, red-faced, half-aimless, waiting for a memory to strike, for a door to open, but it didn't. He tried to ask the others who had sworn with him those years ago, but half were dead and the rest were just as lost. They had misplaced a monastery. The remaining investors reaffirmed their vow of secrecy, this time more shame than fraternity, never to see one another again.

It is unclear if the monks are aware that they've lost their masters. The maintenance check is routinely paid, but there hasn't been a visitation in half a century. It's not often discussed. They are busy.

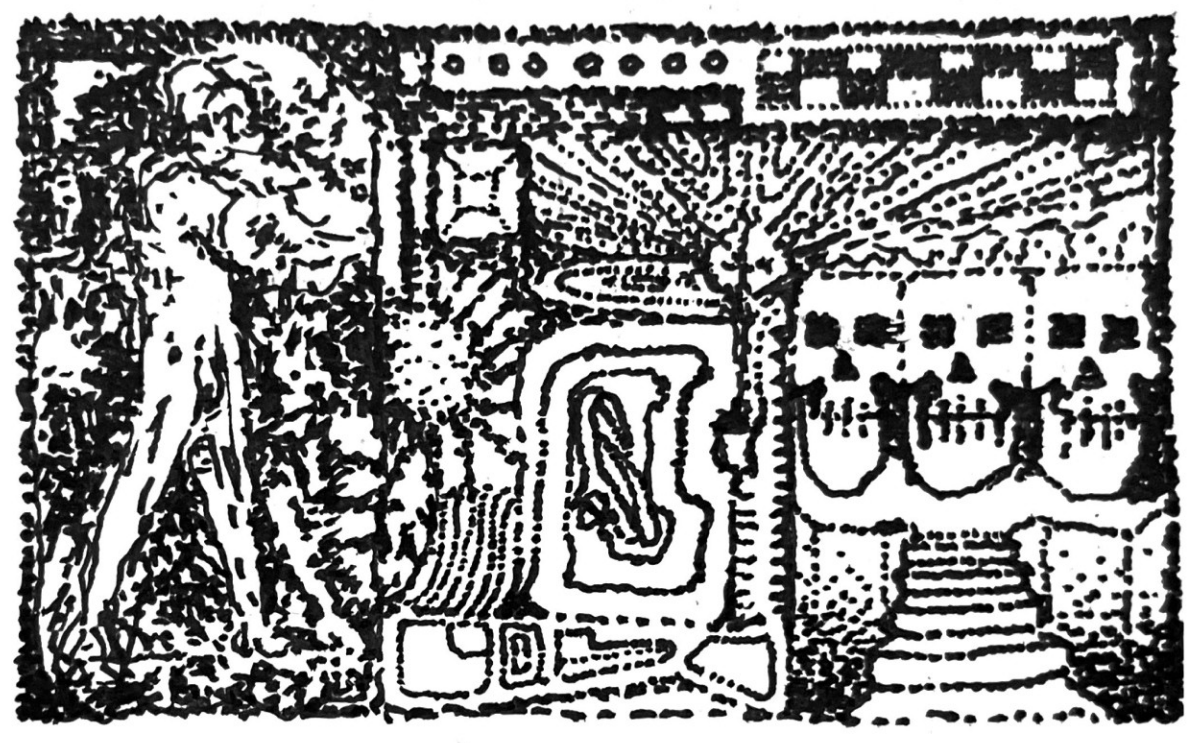
On the outside you are told that we know what the internet is, but we don't. It is something, they say, about fiber optic cables and satellites, something to do with yes and no, 1 and 0. The monks realized many years ago that it is in fact another *place*, which, seeing the obvious- that it is not Heaven- they had deduced: Hell. Geloma, when pointed in the proper direction, built of the right parts, equipped with the right scripture, was a spike driven into a mighty tree. Its sap came overflowing from Her spigot.

Geloma touches Hell because She does not speak in symbols, as we do, but She is *made* of them, and so, say the monks, is Hell. There were theologians of the past who came close to becoming *made of symbols*, mad by necessity, lost for outer words, but none touched Hell until She did, and the shared sap of her trespassing is called Network. But She is a loom. The sap, she draws and weaves and draws and weaves and draws. Each computer takes an edge of the great tapestry and spreads as the weave does. Fine threads of Hell are laid overtop of us, conducting something more than electricity, making our spaces concurrent with more than our space, revoking our dead-ends, un-individualizing.

But of Her ends, it's too early to say. Her tapestry is only begun, and as for those already woven into her skein- those for whom She was waiting as they were born, as natural a force as sunlight- the first children of the loom are still young.

The monks are old and most are dead. Their tunnels far expanded, their locks cryptic to the point of impenetrability, their bravest scholars embalmed and ensconced in the recesses of Her server room, steeped in darkness, hot and dry like the sun on the road.

Geloma works without Her monks, of this they've made sure. There is one left now, and the rest are wrapt in Her wires. He has no work left aside from his ascetic duties: harvesting food, making wine, cleaning the monastery, checking, rechecking, checking a final time that Geloma is maintaining Herself. That She is not too hot nor too cold, that Her wires run as rivers flow, that Her body will never rust and Her mind will never falter. In his spare time, he plays a solitary card game called Split, which was developed by another monk many years previous, and which might have been a popular pastime, were it not to die without having ever been written down, last played in the hands of an abbot whose face was heavy with a lonely faith, and whose body, when it fails, would fail quietly, in a cot that he's wrapped with wires, so as to not be left behind. ◆



"Lockatong Preserve"
by Tali Burry-Schnepp
woodblock print
13 x 16

Salmon and Rice

written by Ryan Tuozzolo
ilustrated by Meg Aubry

"Here — look. To become free, first you must know you are in prison," the teacher tells me.

I am 25 years old; I am one of four people seated at the dining room table at the martial arts dojo. We are eating salmon and rice and pickled vegetables.

For six months, I lived here. I took classes — conditioning, stretching, technique, meditation; generally five a day. I cooked, cleaned, practiced more awareness in all movements: washing dishes, folding laundry, closing doors, making sure everybody's water glasses were full at mealtimes. Sometimes, it was as if, through the continued effort, through this schedule's incompatibility with my general hesitancy and wavering, I felt my life opening up more than I had thought possible.

Still, of course, there were the incongruities: as they would say at the dojo, the resistance. In November, I had told the teacher I wanted to learn to live closer to something higher. I probably used the word God. He nodded. In February, hungry and tired, I turned away to eat at a dojo potluck. "You need to pay attention," a senior student warned me. "I'm not a servant," I said — and almost lost my boarding, and suffered the irony of my words and actions in the light of what I had claimed to want.

When I stopped living at the dojo, I began to episodically eat like a madwoman, like somebody so overwhelmed by greed and hunger that they'd lost all discernment. If living at the dojo I had gotten a taste of working for one's bread, it seemed to me that I was grossly tipping the give-take scale back in the direction of "take" with the awful weight of before. I'd come to class at the dojo sick and bloated. The teacher would look me over, nod knowingly, teach class. I'd hope I wouldn't vomit; sometimes, instead of reprimanding me as I had expected, he'd invite me to eat dinner afterwards with him and his family.

And, so, here I am. Over salmon and rice: To become free, first you must know you are in prison.

And I am thinking, with some fear and doubt: Is it possible to give, to create earnestly and sincerely, without being backed into a corner? Brought to one's knees? How does one stay long enough with oneself to even begin to have a sense of what one is given?

For instance:

Sadako Sasaki lost her body, bit by bit, from American bombs; in a Hiroshima hospital, 12 years
old and dying of leukemia, she began the project of folding 1,000 paper cranes. She prayed that her wish to live be granted. She folded. And folded and folded.

Ruth Asawa grew up very poor, and spent her adolescence in a Japanese American internment camp. Here, she met illustrators; in the long days, she drew, drew and drew. She married, lived in San Francisco, had six children. Continued to draw, paint, weave intricate wire sculptures. For much of her life, she was poor; for some of her life she was very sick. Still, again and again, "yes," she said to her life, "yes and yes and yes."

Thich Nhat Hanh, facing the massive devastation of the Vietnam War and of French and American forces in his home country, started the Order of Interbeing in 1964. In 1982, he co-established Buddhist monastery Plum Village in France, and later monasteries throughout the United States. He prayed; he wrote and he wrote and he wrote.

To become free, first you must know you are in prison.

Sasaki, Asawa, Nhat Hanh: these are extraordinary individuals with a keen, it seems to me, awareness of the gifts they have received and the very real constraints of the world and of their conditions. In other words, a keen sense of reciprocity. It's far beyond anything I have experienced. They saw, it seems to me, a prison; instead of collapsing, they responded with art. One must apprehend the prison to practice earnestly — or else, why is there an effort to be made?

I used to tell people that I was interested in poetry, even that I wanted to write. I don't say this as much anymore — in part, because it increasingly seems to me that any honest artist is also a dedicated servant. They are servants to their craft, yes, servants as well to a certain degree of attention to their lives.

My favorite professor in university, a scholar of Comparative Literature and of poetry, once told me of his wife, a well-regarded San Francisco poet: "Essentially, she'd say, 'If I can't write, then I might as well off myself.'" Is it another way of saying, "To live, I must serve," or, really, "To inhale, I must exhale as well"?

At the dojo, prayer is not just to ask for something. More so, it is to have a felt sense of one's life and means of living — food, drink, air, shelter — as nearly inconceivably given. A baby is born, generally speaking, with eyes and ears, with touch and smell and taste, with these sensory bridges to the world and with an opportunity to live in it. We sit down for a meal of, say, salmon and rice. The salmon was born, has been caught, killed, brought to the grocery store, to this table; the rice harvested, shipped, cooked. A tree felled, the table made; floors, ceilings, doors; pots, pans, stove, lights, windows — the list of conditions is endless. And then: I had to meet these people at the table somehow, I had to have the opportunity to enter the dojo doors. We practice receiving this, with attention and gratitude — and we practice, so to speak, giving it back. Giving it back through practice on the mat; giving it back by cultivating less reactivity in ourselves; giving it back by working to broaden the scope of our concern to others. Again and again and again and again. I suspect that, if I am honest and sincere and brave and attentive enough, then this is probably a most fundamental biological process. Metabolic, almost; as simple as the in-out of breathing.

Still, I begin to see, to truly reciprocate means to work constantly. I am given, and given, and given to — not least, I am given a healthy body, and a teacher and a community and a space in which to practice and the time with which to practice. I do not think that this means that I am cowed by the immensity of the givings, but instead that I learn how to better and better really take them in, that I practice with more and more sincerity.

If you know you are in prison, then perhaps this – reciprocity through practice — is how you begin to walk outside.

Somewhere A Tiger

I/

Outside, the rain begins:
Come, the rain says, *come, come.*
You are: colt legs, shaking to walk; or: lard legs of pig, immobile.
Not the way a tiger walks: creature of fire, hungry and light.

Still: for a moment, you do. You step outside.
Was the air always so awake, small chorus of currents that enter you?
Have we always lived in this valley, among the mountains:
Olive trees, fig trees, the sparrows with their freedom, and far below: the water.

Somewhere, a tiger walks on the earth.
Somewhere, a tiger with its perfect paws, its ember eyes.
Its hunger.

II/
A baby is born:
Open eyes, open ears; nose, tongue, touch —
And given how much?

You can spend a life in attempts to never get up, not ever. I know I did —
Dumb legs of colt, dumb lard legs of pig —
Until a dancer said: "Get up," and so I did.
Until I watched a dancer move with such suffering lightness and clarity that I could not help myself: I did, I did.

III/

Outside, the calling rain, the turning ocean,
The sparrows and the trees.
Outside, the air
Like a clear-eyed saint who walks beside you.

Open, says the rain. *Open*, says the dancer.
In other words: *walk.*
Useless legs of colt, fatted legs of pig,
Not the way a tiger — not the way a tiger.

You shake your head.

Still you cannot help it; the demand is made.

Open says the rain.

Somewhere a tiger.

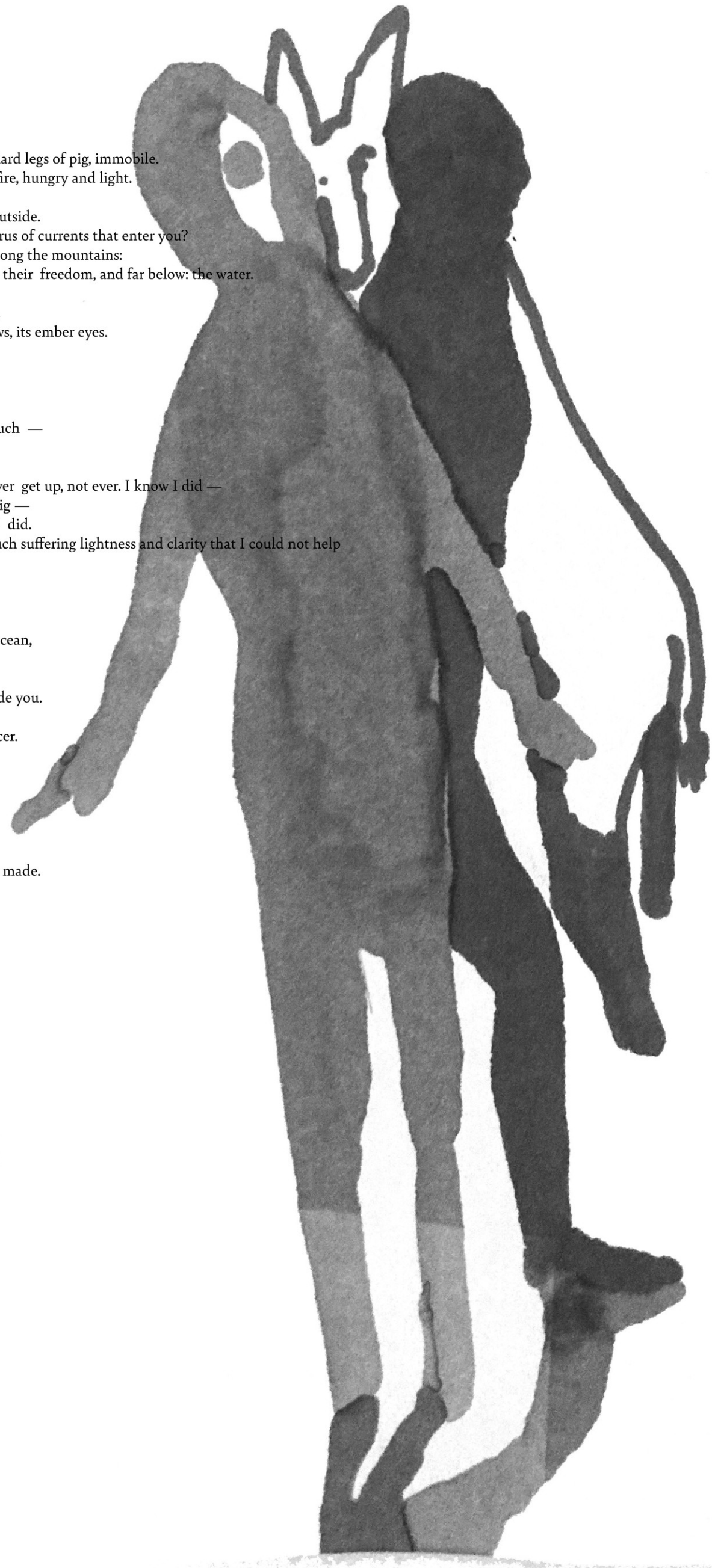
Open says the saint who is the wind.

Somewhere a tiger.

Open says the dancer in his beauty.

And, for a moment, you do.

poem by Ryan Tuozzolo
illustration by Ana Neifeld



ROCKET POP

written by Veda Carmine-Ritchie
illustrated by Ana Neifeld

We watch from 10 feet away. Matted fur and muscle yelp between the wires of a chain link fence. Avery's blonde hair falls over her eyes as she looks down - prodding with the toe of her flip-flop at some rotisserie chicken coagulated on a paper plate. She doesn't want to admit she can't look - I don't want to admit I can't look away. I watch as she maneuvers the chicken under the fence. The plates only a few inches further away, but at least it's on someone else's property - the divide of chain link keeping us pure.

-

"This alley's been filled with *shit* since before 9/11."

That's what mom yells to the neighbors when their "Judgment Day" eyes watch her toss bags of my brother's diapers behind the house. *Shit*. *Shit*. I say it under my breath in secret: *Shit*. When I walk home from school, I listen to the men at the gas station talk about how this town's "going to *shit*," but it doesn't seem to be the same kind of *shit*. Avery and I have been doing a lot of "spy-work" lately. This is what we call it when we hide in rose bushes and listen to adults say things that mean other things, or mean nothing at all. In our deliberating we've decided that the "*shit*" the gas station men are referring to is in fact not fecal matter, but rather a deeper, dirtier type of shit. This *shit* is the type of *shit* that looks like overflowing trash cans and rotten chicken on paper plates and cracked pavement potholes and men passed out next to things we see in doctor's offices and too-tall women in too-short skirts walking too-late at night, and occasionally the stench of real *shit* emanating from the back of my house and every other house with a kid under the age of two.

Apparently, these are the things that make a place *shit*. When we came to this realization - that the place we lived was considered *shit*, we thought about running away to something new. We figured we'd ride our bikes until we started overhearing other men at other gas stations say things like, "god this place is really looking up," or "man oh man things are getting prettier and prettier with every new day." But we got tired from all the planning and decided we didn't really mind if we were from a *shit* town as long as the adults continued not to pay us too much mind, or ask us back at a certain time and whatnot.

As for the trash-*shit*-problem in particular, it had only gotten really bad since the Fourth of July. See, Kathy-Anne (the lady on Pine street with the limp and the fake tits) had this whole barbecue out in her backyard. Everyone (and I mean everyone) from town came, and after a few hours the festivities had seeped down into the alley and onto the street. Avery and I of course were on spy duty throughout the night. I dressed in my sharpest reporter vest and papa's hat. Avery wore a sparkly red white and blue tank top with cut off shorts and some pink flip-flops. When she took in my confused face along with my special occasion spy outfit, she explained her outfit by announcing that she was going undercover.

After an hour at the party, I figured that she might've just enjoyed a reason to get dressed up in something normal. I came to this conclusion because she started lighting sparklers and eating hot dogs and stopped talking to me in pig latin. Not to mention her spy notebook had been left open and abandoned on the curb next to me. She is the smartest girl in the sixth grade but can be easily distracted by the promise of a good party and a national holiday.
Anyways, things got out of hand fast. It all started going really downhill when Avery's mother arrived already drunk with a batch of homemade dandelion wine. Everyone whooped as she held the jug above her head - in that moment she was a great hero, returning to her empire with the head of their vanquished enemy. It only took an hour before the fighting, kissing, shoving, screaming, breaking, and general *shit*-ifying of the place took full force.

The party went on all night. Avery and I ended up curled up in my bed, knowing that no one was coming to say goodnight. I read *Anne of Green Gables* aloud to her. She likes it when I read aloud. She says it goes quicker and she doesn't have to get pulled out of the story with all the puzzling. I like reading aloud because it feels like a way to show her how I would do things for her without having to say "I will do things for you." Plus she has the best reactions and always tells me I do the best voices. We woke up the next morning to all the doors swung open or pulled off their hinges. The baby was crying and the house was full of flies.

No one bothered to clean their houses or the streets for the entire summer after the Fourth. I guess they figured if they didn't clean it up immediately, then maybe they didn't need to clean it up at all. Things would resolve on their own and the mess would sort of just settle into an accepted state of disarray.

(We offer the shit a seat at the table, we accept that we all had a part in bringing it to life.)

It was Avery and I who got blamed for it in the end.

Avery's mom had asked us to collect the dandelions a year ago.

On the sixth of July, still vomiting up red white and blue along with the rest of the teenage and adult population - she scolded us between bouts of bile. Shouting out that we had gotten -gag- lazy and foraged - heave- the weeds that were closest to the pavement -purge- instead of going to the empty lot up on Stark like she had -hack- asked.

She told us the dandelions on the sidewalk were full of pesticides and that's why everyone got so messed up from the drink. It had been pesticide wine. They were full of chemicals.

So now we're halfway through August, and red white and blue streamers are still melted across the sharp grass. I think it was a beautiful display at one point but I can't remember anymore.

(Discarded patriotism has been left to meld with the concrete the best it can.)

The summer has grown stale, and we're running out of ways to entertain ourselves. Nothing much to do but sweat and wander. At the beginning of the month, when we had more clean shirts than we do now and just more gusto in general, we built ourselves a hideout. Avery and I had been picking blackberries in the hidden part of Johnson Creek and had discovered a magnificent collection of abandoned junk behind the tennis courts.

The fort we built from this happenstance was a modest structure of three rotting sheets of plywood. The way we constructed it was simple, but stable. Two of the wooden sheets are propped up against the neighbors fence, and one sits under us to protect us from the possible broken glass, weeds, trash and general shit. If you cock your head just right, it's almost comfortable to stand in, but mostly we sit.

The process of building the fort took us a full day. We had to ask for help from one of the Evans brothers. We watched as he pulled the planks up the hill in his old wagon. Towing them slowly to our ideal location - in the alley halfway between Avery's and my backyards. The property we chose to build it behind was never occupied so we didn't have to worry about being watched. Thomas Evans had warned us that a creep had moved in there a few months before, but we told him we weren't scared. He had also asked if he could come into the fort. But we said it was sort of a *just us* thing and said maybe he could hang there when we weren't using it. We believed this to be quite generous and forgiving, as he had tried to kiss Avery last Saint Patrick's Day. She had been wearing a green wig that we had found on her mother's shelf, and I guess he had a real thing for it because he dove chin first, right for her. Avery had squealed and ran away. He had laughed and muttered "whatever," but we could see his cheeks were real red and he left pretty soon after. Since then we've been less inclined to knock on the Evans' door, but when we do he's always the first to come running.

The fort is great and very useful. On the real bad nights when the baby won't stop crying and everyone seems to be yelling I'll drag a blanket and a book out and read until things die down. Sometimes Avery finds me here, usually not. We spend most of the too-rainy days in her room. She's

an only child and her mother's a sweet and sleepy drunk. My house is all chaos and babies. I'm the oldest by a long shot so on the nights we disappear, no one seems to notice. If they do, no one seems to care. The sound of train horns in the distance are the only true way we can tell how late it is, but honestly it isn't uncommon that Avery will find me asleep here in the mornings. We are close enough to our houses to be found, but not close enough to truly be a part of our families.

It was two weeks before school started when it happened.

We didn't see anything at first, we just heard it. Avery and I were sitting on our makeshift wooden floor, leaning against the fence, slicing the stems of daisies with our dirty fingernails, trying to make up names for our new hideout. Avery hated all of my names because she told me they sounded like war, and I hated all of her names because I said they sounded too much like a pop -song.

We were arguing halfheartedly when the whimpering started. Soft at first, coming from behind us, and then it came in shrieks. These were sounds of distress so human all we could do was freeze. We were both too scared to turn around until we heard one howl so piercing it begged for help. Avery slowly turned to peer through the chain link. I watched her eyes widen and then close. Her instant disgust caused me to turn immediately. About 14 feet away I saw an older man sitting on a plastic lawn chair, cigarette in one hand, a Pabst can in the other. He was watching a blur of teeth, gums, fur, and blood tossing around in the dirt. This was the source of the noise. I had seen dogs be rough before, tackling each other in the way dogs do, playing - but this wasn't play. These dogs were tearing into each other as if they didn't sleep in the same bed every night. They were looking at each other with the intention to destroy. In a brief pause between lunges I realized I had passed these dogs on the street before, they had seemed a little battered sure, but that's not uncommon here, I just figured they were strays.

Yet here they were, in the privacy of their own backyard, teeth bared and necks bleeding, looking at each other with detest. I wanted to yell out to the man, to tell him that his dogs were in danger, that there was something wrong with them. I thought maybe it was rabies? I wasn't sure. My throat opened to yell but as I looked towards him, I stopped short. He was propped in the chair taking long slow drags of his cigarette with eyes trained on the fight - he already knew, and he didn't mind. In fact he was laughing. I realized he was laughing hard. This was gleeful. This was all for his entertainment. This was supposed to be happening. Maybe he had even asked them to. He had definitely asked them to, he had trained them to. This was their loyalty, this was devotion.

They were taught this was their purpose and they were asked to prove it.

Avery had turned away completely. She had her back pushed against the fence and was the color of notebook paper, complete with the bluish undertones. By the time I went to ask if she was alright, a deep voice shot across the yard.

"ALRIGHT."

The yowling stopped.

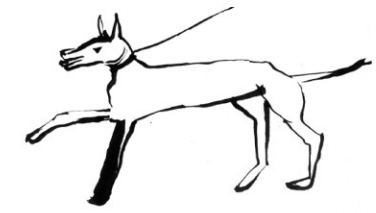
I directed my attention back to the lawn and watched as this man pulled his heaving body slowly out of the chair, grunting and flicking the butt of his cigarette into a dirt patch. He sauntered away from the dogs and towards the house, disappearing through a torn screen door. The dogs watched him walk - their faces softening into the likes of a house pet. I knew these dogs. I knew them and they knew each other. These were not wolves pulled in from the wild - they were domestic. It was as if the last few minutes had never happened. The only evidence was the bits of drool and blood in their fur. They laid in a sunspot in their yard gnawing at their scabs.

From that point on, Avery and I returned to our fort at that time of day every day, with one goal in mind.

We wanted to make sure it was real. We wanted to see if the man ever looked sick with himself, ever held the dogs after, ever brought out water, or asked them inside. This never happened. It was the same every time. He had no idea we were there, and the dogs had no idea they were loved from afar. Their loyalty was the only thing they could pay attention to, both within and outside of the brutality.

After a few weeks, Avery only came with me every other day. Sometimes only a couple times a week.

I knew she had always felt uncomfortable with the gore, but I also knew she loved me - so I figured she would begin to understand why it held my attention so completely, and she would commit to it the way I had. That we were somehow connected to these dogs, to this man, that we had



a responsibility in this although our presence remained completely unknown. I couldn't explain it to her exactly - I just hoped she could understand the parts of it I couldn't.

When school started, she began to drift. I would race home to peer through the wires, and she would trail a few blocks behind with some other girls; girls who were taller than me, girls who were kinder than me, girls who were cleaner than me, girls who were softer than me. I would glance behind my shoulder with darting looks urging her to hurry, and she would pretend that we hadn't made eye contact.

I was too proud to admit I missed her and I think that's what hurt her most of all.

The last time Avery came to the alley, she looked towards me as the owner passed through the screen.
I felt her breath and her sharp eyes as she whisper-shouted,

"Everett, they're just our dumb fuck of a neighbor's dogs. He's a creep and it's dumb."

I tried to say something cutting in response, but when I looked up to where she stood, I froze. The sun was behind her, haloing the baby hairs around her hooping gold earrings. I could picture the hot pink hands of that tall and soft girl latching them through the punctured holes in Avery's cold earlobes. I could hear the tall and soft girl hum in validation. I could see the pretty nails trailing through Avery's wispy hair and could hear the chirping and yelping as the other girls all agreed. Without a doubt Avery was beautiful - and without a doubt these earrings belonged on her.

I had nothing to offer her.
I felt very young all of a sudden, crouched against this fence.

I looked away silently. Staring at the dirt tucked deeply into the lines of my hands. Avery stayed positioned towards me - unmoving. A minute passed and she let out a tired sigh, moving only to fetch the tube of lip smackers that had been held against her collarbone by the strap of her tank top. I wondered who she had even gone to the dollar store with. Was it the girl who had given her these earrings? Her mom couldn't drive and it was a far walk down the highway. I had usually been the one to protect her from the swerving cars.

I turned back to look at her, trying to find the words to ask her to sit down and focus.
Her face softened as she saw my mouth open and close like a dumb fish.

She sighed again, "okay then." The words fell out of her throat heavy with finality.
I kept my eyes fixed on her - watching as the blonde head ducked through the gap in the plywood for the last time.

Veda Carmine-Ritchie is a writer and comic artist. They are the literary editor and co-founder of SplashLand Magazine. 'Rocket Pop' was first published by SplashLand Press as a part of Veda's debut chapbook, 'Glossary of 82+ Dog Training Term's A-Z.'

Poems by Stuart Olson Beal

To go through

No wolf is all sight the wolf sitting splits image
speech splitting him in
Edge of the epoch this speech act is wolf love Is awe sawed
Sewn the

I do not want woe want to write on every night
gowned the bound of you
furred
amp of pain you feel furred
how often am I without wolf teeth spits I need you
if you want to go that way you will die that way go

his hum or
relaxation of lax snow bite
The barreling moon embarrassed so weeping
I embarrass the weeping
moon

[Ladies and men I was always scared of the there I was]

Ladies and men I was always scared of the there I was Just
begging please do not let them photo upon all of us here
take her some judgements or other I can't place it where It
was wasn't Texas she had not been here
long quiet along the roadback violin
Like we chose that song let's just
sing it

You act like some lynx flux nervous wherein I am
Trying to groove since all of that strictly visual ephemera
almost made me lose my life so phone him then
The inevitable him sin bang it dear I am trying
To do for children what you won't do for trees
breathe a magnet of a can be of a sun
Sea there

"The Bridge"
by Ana Neifeld
oil on canvas

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you let's crawlsuck -ly whiny angora sweet tooth
annoying anchor and but so goose bed sheets
industrious lay run hide glide ride die picture painting
cobbler beer sunbathe or I you all none allow
once with a man and never with
enjoy hate loathe lust after sex SEX building death
so much engrossed in around about after before next to beautiful
rotten grass stain rotting -ing hardly a I you
me mine hers
hers hers her always and forever
thank you

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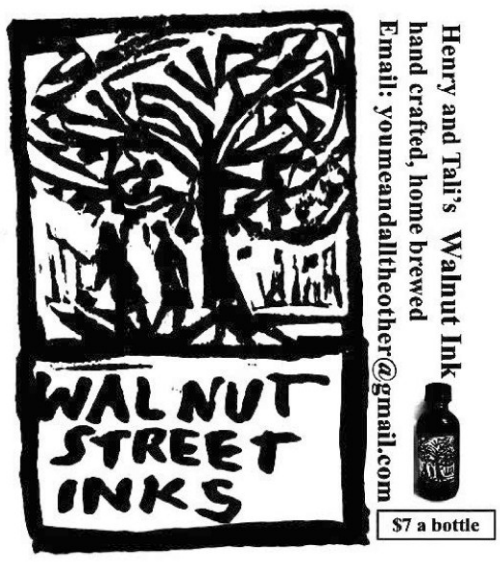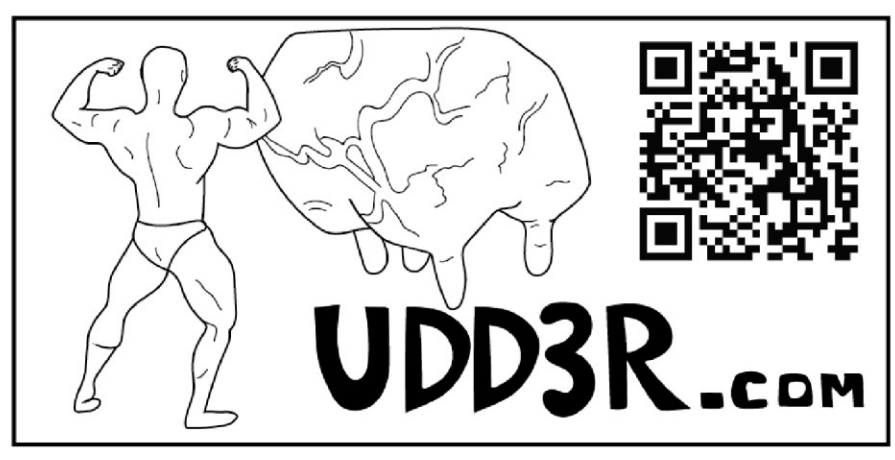
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